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ABSTRACT

This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The 12 titles deal with a variety of topics, including the following: communication and perceptions of organizational climate; perceptions of communications between federal and local educational agencies; intraorganizational conflict in the purchasing decision making process in the hospital environment; the interrelationships between a secondary school administrator's written messages to parents and parental attitudes toward the school; the correlations between acquisition of basic speech competencies and supervisory level, salary, self-perceived job performance, and self-perceived job satisfaction; strategic planning for organizational effectiveness in managing relations with critical publics; communication networks and influence patterns in industrial buying behavior; shared decision processes in educational organizations; a communication theory of organization; participativeness, uncertainty, and environmental complexity of supervisors; communication between user/managers and information service department personnel; and the implications for social control of organizational stories as an expression of management philosophy. (RL)

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PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN FEDERAL AGENCIES AND LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES

Cochran, Daniel Stewart
AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF INTRAORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT IN THE PURCHASING DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN THE HOSPITAL ENVIRONMENT

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COMMUNICATION AND PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Order No. 7917670

ALBRECHT, Terrance Lynn, Ph.D. Michigan State University, 1978. 193pp.

This dissertation reports a study of communication and members' perceptions of the environmental "climate" of the organization. Specifically, the study investigated differences in perceptions based on aspects of involvement in the informal communication system of the organization.

The research questions pursued in the study were developed after an extensive review of previous climate research in the fields of communication and organizational behavior. Prior studies in both fields had not fully examined climate perceptions from a communication perspective. That is, neither body of work had conceptualized the nature of perceptions based on communication theory with constructs concerning aspects of the information flow in the organization.

The present study sought to overcome these inadequacies by developing an approach to the study of climate, based on a theory which specifies how attitudes are shaped by the nature of information flow. Since Durkheim (1938), organizational theorists have recommended the utility of studying cognitive processes in conjunction with social structure. This conceptual approach followed the recommendation by combining force aggregation theory with the constructs of communication structure, information needs, and communication rules. The results of the study conducted in a unionized manufacturing plant show that such a framework of attitudes and information flow is particularly useful for explaining the nature of environmental perceptions.

Specifically, the study found several significant differences in perceptions between "key" communicators and "non-key" communicators (those often isolated from informal message flow). Support was found for hypotheses asserting that key communicators tend to perceive themselves psychologically "closer" to managers, as well as more central to their cognitive environments. In addition, overall properties (e.g., size and shape) of the cognitive spaces for the two groups tended to differ, with the space for the key communicators showing somewhat less variability. The report of the study concludes with directions for future research.

PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN FEDERAL AGENCIES AND LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES

BERDINER, Pauline, Ed.D. University of Southern California, 1979. Chairman: Professor John Stallings

Problem. This study was directed toward the problem of analyzing the perceptions of the total effectiveness of initial written communication, subsequent communication, and general communication between federal agencies and local educational agencies and to identify some methods which may contribute to improved communication effectiveness between those agencies.

Procedure. A six-part survey instrument was developed to collect the requisite data. During a pilot study, the instrument was critiqued and appropriately modified. Data were collected from two sources: (1) Fifteen school districts randomly selected from four Southern California counties and stratified by amount of enrollment. The instrument was administered to fifteen personnel designated by the superintendent as federal-level liaison. (2) Fifteen federal agencies within the USOE randomly selected from those agencies which administer programs directly to local school districts. The instrument was administered to fifteen officials responsible for local-level liaison. To determine statistical significance, the chi-square analysis, Mann-Whitney U-test, and Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance were applied to the tabulated responses.

Findings. (1) The majority of LEA (85.7%) and FA (100.0%) respondents generally agreed that there was a need to improve communications between the federal and local levels. (2) The majority of LEA respondents generally disagreed while the majority of FA respondents generally agreed that federal guidelines and regulations were written in a suitable manner for effective implementation. (3) The majority (80.0%) of LEA respondents generally agreed while the majority (58.1%) of FA respondents generally disagreed that guideline flexibility was needed to implement federal programs successfully. (4) The majority (77.9%) of LEA respondents generally disagreed while the majority (71.4%) of FA respondents generally agreed that subsequent communication received from various federal personnel was communicated consistently. (5) The majority of LEA (84.6%) and FA (91.7%) respondents generally agreed that it was feasible to further improve communications between both agencies by elevating Education to cabinet-level status. (6) The majority of respondents generally agreed that communication effectiveness between agencies could be improved by federal agencies incorporating the following: (a) citation of legal codes and references, (b) writing in layman terms, (c) direct communication with the program contact person, (d) establishment of joint LEA/FA conferences, (e) provisions to inform LEA's of appropriate federal-to-state communications.

Conclusions. (1) The total effectiveness of initial written communication and general communication was perceived to be inadequate by both agencies. (2) Subsequent communication was perceived to be essential for clarification purposes by both agencies. (3) Federal agencies demonstrated positive perceptions toward LEA's recommendations to improve communication effectiveness between both agencies. (4) Educational background, degree of fiscal involvement, and years as FA/LEA liaison exerted no significant influence over LEA's perceptions of communication effectiveness between the local and federal levels. District size was influential in the perception of the functional need of subsequent communication.

Recommendations. (1) Federal agencies should evaluate the current procedures and practices used in writing application forms, compliance obligations, and funding eligibility to minimize the clarification need of subsequent communication. (2) Federal agencies should provide periodic in-service for agency personnel to establish a clear understanding of program goals and to promote consistent communications to the LEA's. (3) Federal agencies which administer programs to LEA's should implement joint conferences to provide leadership or assistance and to afford each agency the opportunity to express concerns. (4) Current procedures for writing federal guidelines and regulations should be reviewed. The written form should clearly communicate the federal intent to LEA's to facilitate effective implementation. (5) A study should be initiated to evaluate the current organizational structure of USOE within the HEW hierarchy. Consideration should be given to making Education a separate entity.

AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF INTRAORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT IN THE PURCHASING DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN THE HOSPITAL ENVIRONMENT

Order No. 7919221

COCHRAN, Daniel Stewart, Ph.D. University of Arkansas, 1979. 223pp. Major Professor: Dr. Donald White

The purpose of this study was to investigate intraorganizational conflict as it exists in the purchasing decision-making process in general short-term hospitals. The objectives of the study were to: (1) determine how frequently intraorganizational conflict exists in the purchasing decision-making process, (2) determine the effect intraorganizational conflict has on the purchasing decision-making process (whether functional or dysfunctional), (3) determine the location of conflict--i.e., between which buying center members, (4) determine which conflict resolution strategies are being utilized most frequently, and finally, (5) determine what relationship the following categorical variables have with intraorganizational conflict: (a) hospital organizational size, (b) hospital profit orientation, (c) hospital respondent's perception of conflict, and (d) hospital purchasing situation (routine versus non-routine).

Two different, yet complementary, data gathering and subsequent data analysis techniques were utilized in this research design to accomplish the five research objectives developed for the study. A thirty-three item structured questionnaire sent to all ninety general short-term hospitals in Arkansas produced a sixty-two percent usable response rate. ANOVA and MANOVA were the primary statistical techniques used to analyze the questionnaire data. Nine hospitals were selected

for indepth interviews based on the results of the questionnaire. Respondents from each hospital selected were given the statistically significant findings from the questionnaire analysis and asked their opinions as to the probable causes of each.

Eleven statistically significant findings were reported in this paper relative to the research objectives.

Frequency of Conflict:

1. Administrators perceived a greater frequency of conflict than did purchasing managers.
2. Conflict occurred more frequently in non-routine purchasing situations (high $ value transactions) than in routine purchasing situations (lower $ value transactions).
3. Conflict occurred more frequently in large hospitals ($200 beds), followed then by small hospitals (≅ 100 beds). Conflict in medium size hospitals (100–199 beds) occurred the least frequently.

Effect of Conflict:

4. Conflict was perceived as being more functional (helpful) than dysfunctional (harmful).
5. Administrators perceived conflict as being more functional than did purchasing managers.
6. Conflict was perceived as being more functional (helpful) in non-routine purchasing situations than in routine purchasing situations.

Conflict Resolution Strategies:

7. Overall, the conflict resolution strategy used most frequently was the win/win strategy, in which a concensus is reached and everyone is satisfied with the decision.
8. In non-routine purchasing situations the win/lose strategy, in which the person in the authority position makes the final decision and some of the individuals involved end up not being satisfied, was used most frequently.

Conflict Location:

9. Conflict was located most frequently between the administrator and the medical staff.
10. In non-routine purchasing situations, conflict was located more frequently between the board and the administrator.
11. Conflict between the administrator and the board occurred more frequently in small hospitals than in large hospitals.

A STUDY OF THE INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE WRITTEN MESSAGES OF A SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR TO PARENTS AND THE ATTITUDE OF THOSE PARENTS TOWARD THE SCHOOL Order No. 7915789

DUFFY, Linda Ann, Ph.D. University of Maryland, 1978. 129pp. Supervisor: Dr. Clarence A. Newell

The study investigated the relationship between the written messages of a secondary school administrator to parents and the attitude of those parents toward the school.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of the written messages of a school administrator to parents about their child's performance in school on the attitude those parents have toward the school. It investigated whether those written messages have different effects on attitude if they are negative only, positive only, both negative and positive, or, if there are no written messages, what effect the absence of communication has on parent attitude toward the school. The study also investigated the indirect effect of those messages by measuring the attitude of the students whose parents comprised those four groups.

The following questions were posed:

1. What is the effect of written administrator messages that are negative information-giving on parent attitude toward the school?
2. What is the effect of written administrator messages that are positive information-giving on parent attitude toward the school?
3. What is the effect of written administrator messages that are negative information-giving followed by positive information-giving communication on parent attitude toward the school?
4. What is the effect of no written message from the administrator on parent attitude toward the school?

The same questions were raised in relation to the four student groups.

Procedures

Four groups of parents constituted the sample for this study. Each of the four groups of parents were given a survey about their attitude toward the school, whether it is positive (approving) or negative (disapproving), after they had received either a negative written message, a positive written message, both a negative and a positive written message, or no written message from the school administrator. The students about whom these messages were written were also surveyed in four similar groups to determine the indirect effect of written messages from a secondary school administrator on their attitude toward the school.

The two instruments used to survey the parents' and the students' attitudes were the Bullock School-Community Attitude Assessment for Educational Administrators and the Buxton Student Attitude Questionnaire.

Data generated from the two instruments were analyzed using the one-way analysis of variance.

Conclusion

The data did not statistically support the hypothesis of this study that the attitude of parents who receive written negative messages, written positive messages, written negative and positive messages, or no written messages from the school administrator will be significantly different.

Recommendations

As a result of this study, several areas for further research relative to written messages of secondary school administrators have been identified. Some of these are:

1. What are the factors which generated the negative attitudes toward the school when only positive letters had been received from the school?
2. How many letters would be required to effect an attitude change from negative to positive?
3. What would be the effect of written messages that were positive on parents of students who were not discipline referrals?
4. What different research design and/or technique might yield supporting data for the hypotheses?
5. What might be the effects on this study of blocking variables such as race, income, single parent homes, and level of education?
6. What different instruments might be designed to measure the specific impact of written messages from the administrator on parent attitude?
7. Is language interaction, both written and spoken, a crucial factor in resolving the conflict between the institution and the individual's need-disposition?

AN EXAMINATION OF CORRELATIONS BETWEEN ACQUISITION OF BASIC SPEECH COMPETENCIES AND SUPERVISORY LEVEL, SALARY, SELF-PERCEIVED JOB PERFORMANCE AND SELF-PERCEIVED JOB SATISFACTION IN EMPLOYMENT

Order No. 7927529

HOPSON, Carol Stein, Ph.D. The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1979. 141pp. Supervisor: Professor John H. Pennybacker

Most people are aware of the importance of oral communication skills for those business people who are asked to give oral reports or to speak at special gatherings. However, the oral communication skills needed in employment are often not recognized, even by the individuals who are involved.

This researcher found that while the business community is aware of the importance of oral communication, little has been done by business people or educators to promote the teaching of oral communication skills to the labor force in positions not requiring college education.

The purpose of this study was to survey vocational-technical educators, employers and employees to determine their perceptions of the oral communication skills needed for men and women in vocational-technical employment.

A series of questionnaires and interviews were used to gather substantive data to test the null hypothesis: There is no relationship between the achievement of selected oral communication competencies and the supervisory level, salary, self-perceived job performance, and self-perceived job satisfaction among individuals with vocational-technical training.

The questionnaire sent to educators and employers contained seventeen competency-based oral communication skills which are job-related. These were drawn from oral communication competencies found in many competency-based educational programs and presented as behaviorally-stated objectives.

The recipients were asked to rank each statement as to its importance in employment. Six statements were regarded as necessary for employment by over seventy percent of the educators and employers who responded. These are (1) listens to others, understands directions given by others, (2) asks questions when in doubt without hesitation, (3) communicates directions clearly, (4) responds to questions asked by others, (5) articulates and pronounces words clearly so others can understand, and (6) communicates ideas to co-workers.

The educators and employers agreed that of the seventeen competencies given, the ability to "talk before a group or in a one-to-one setting and present information clearly, accurately, and interestingly" was the least needed skill.

A review of existing vocational-technical programs in this area revealed that little or no emphasis is placed on providing vocational-technical trainees with needed skills in oral communication.

A third questionnaire was sent to recent graduates of vocational-technical programs in the New Orleans metropolitan area to determine the extent to which these individuals had gained oral communication competencies and the effect of their speaking skills on their employment.

The respondents were employed in sixteen vocational or technical occupations with the largest percentage being in welding and office occupations. Over seventy-nine percent of the respondents were between the ages of twenty and thirty-five. Fifty-six percent of the respondents were women.

Only eight percent of the respondents were not native Americans. Forty-six percent were white and forty-six percent were black.

The responses of these employees as to the amount of training acquired in the six communication skills and the need for these skills in their jobs were analyzed. It was determined that a positive correlation does exist between the acquisition of selected oral communication competencies and supervisory level, salary, self-perceived job performance and self-perceived job satisfaction.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN MANAGING RELATIONS WITH CRITICAL PUBLICS: A COMPARISON ACROSS PROFIT/NONPROFIT LINES

Order No. 7917665

JACOBS, George William, Ph.D. Georgia State University - College of Business Administration, 1979. 212pp. Chairman: Dr. Leslie W. Rue

The central aims of this descriptive study were to determine (a) how the chief administrators of commercial banks and public libraries in six southeastern states view their various publics, (b) how they manage their organizations' relations with those of their publics which they regard as critical to their success, and (c) whether banks and libraries differ significantly in their respective views and approaches. A mail questionnaire was utilized for data collection.

The study sample of 505 respondents includes 200 banks and 305 libraries. There are five categories of response data for analysis: (1) Organizational background, (2) Managerial approach to performance evaluation, (3) Managerial assessment of critical publics, (4) Description of relationships with critical publics, and (5) Management of relations with critical publics.

Tests of ten sets of hypotheses were performed, using standard statistical tests for rank-ordered data. The study findings are summarized below:

(1) Bankers and librarians generally do not regard the satisfaction of critical publics as sufficient evidence of overall successful performance, nor do they generally regard periodic internal evaluation of overall organizational performance on a systematic basis as absolutely essential.

(2) Bankers and librarians generally do not agree, either within or between their industry groups, on the relative criticalness of their respective publics to the overall success of their organizations. Criticalness was found to be related to both perceived relative power and perceived threat.

(3) For both banks and libraries, three measures of organizational practices and three measures of managerial plans and controls were found to be generally inconsistent with six managerial assessments with respect to the five most critical publics.

(4) Based on specific measures, banks and libraries were found to be relatively consistent internally in their approaches to the management of relations with critical publics, generally inconsistent among themselves within industry group, and generally consistent between groups. Banks and libraries are about equally consistent within their respective industry groups.

Pertinent conclusions drawn from the study and findings include the following:

(1) There is a high level of interest among bankers and librarians in this relatively new, unexplored subject.

(2) Strategic planning in practice, within the scope of this study topic, remains a largely undeveloped concept, even at the earliest stages of the process, at least partly because of a perceived lack of critical importance.

(3) There is evidence of significant and widespread inconsistency in organizations between the views expressed by chief administrators and the actions taken by their organizations concerning their relations with their various publics.

(4) Profit and nonprofit organizations, represented in this study by banks and libraries, are perhaps more alike than different at the present time in their views of their publics and in their approaches to the management of environmental relations.

(5) Finally, a major opportunity exists across a broad spectrum of organizational life to achieve better management and greater organizational effectiveness through improvements in strategic planning in the management of relations with critical publics.

COMMUNICATION NETWORKS AND INFLUENCE PATTERNS IN INDUSTRIAL BUYING BEHAVIOR Order No. 7924689

JOHNSTON, Wesley James, Ph.D. University of Pittsburgh, 1979. 366pp.

This study defined and operationalized four dimensions of the popular "buying center" concept (members of the buying organization who interact during the buying decision process). The four dimensions were: (1) vertical involvement--how many various levels of the organizational hierarchy exert influence in the buying decision process; (2) lateral involvement--how many different departments and divisions exerting influence in the purchase decision; (3) integrative complexity--the amount of interconnection between the members of the buying center; and (4) differentiation--the total number of individuals involved in the buying decision process. The centrality of the purchasing manager in the buying center communication process was also examined using sociometric techniques. This provided an objective measure of the purchasing manager's influence in the communication network.

The prediction variables were concerned with structural aspects of the firm and purchase situation attributes. The structural aspects of the firm examined size, formalization, centralization of authority, and complexity. The purchase situation attributes measured the importance, novelty, and complexity of the purchase decision to the buying firm.

The sample consisted of thirty-one firms in which the purchase of an item of capital equipment and an industrial service were examined in "snowball" sampling. In all, two hundred forty-one interviews were conducted. Using these interviews, the communication network for each purchase situation was constructed. The tasks each individual was involved in were also determined.

The results of the dissertation are reported in five sections. First, sample statistics concerning the sixty-two purchase situations and thirty-one firms as well as some descriptive correlations are reported. The next two sections contain a factor analysis of the independent variables, in an attempt to provide support for the theoretical concepts of the model, and a regression analysis of the dimensions of the buying center against the structural variables of the firm, the purchase situation attributes and the characteristics of the purchasing managers involved in each purchase decision. The fourth section aggregates the communication networks for each product class. This aggregation presents a unique and valuable manner in which to examine industrial buying behavior. The diagonal cells of the aggregate communication matrix depicts participation on a percentage basis while the off diagonal cells indicated dyad formation between the various participants (who communicates with whom). The final section provides a qualitative description of the flow of the industrial buying decision process. The past literature has offered numerous models depicting the process as a straight forward chronological flow of easily identifiable steps or phases. The results of this dissertation tend to refute this and indicate that while certain tasks tend to be required in most purchase decisions, the process is more iterative and tends to have no clearly identifiable sequence. A task involvement matrix depicts the extent to which the various functions become involved in the different tasks of the buying process.

The findings also indicate that although there are differences in buying center composition for purchases of capital equipment and industrial services, the differences are subtle and generalizations may be inappropriate. Structural variables of the firm and purchase situation attributes were found to affect buying center dimensions in consistent ways.

Implications of the results suggest industrial buying behavior can benefit from a more appropriate social level of analysis. The dyadic-systems approach adopted in this study presents the first significant findings concerning buying center composition.

DETERMINANTS OF SHARED DECISION PROCESSES IN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS Order No. 7927411

NATHANSON, Leslie, Ph.D. Northwestern University, 1979. 201pp. Adviser: Anthony M. Cresswell

This dissertation examines a theoretical model of decision-making behavior in organizations. The model was built on extant theory and research which suggest that organizational decision-making is bureaucratic, collegial or political, contingent on the needs of the decisionmaker and the desires and power of groups affected by the decision (e.g., March and Simon 1958, Baldridge 1971, Pfeffer 1974, Lawrence and Lorsch 1967). The results of the study generally support the Vroom and Yetton (1973) contingency model of decisionmaking which suggests that power is retained by an administrator who can assess the decision situation in order to choose a decision strategy. The study also supports the Pfeffer (1977) political model in that organization decisionmaking is not found to be consistent with organizational rationality, but with personal rationality. The process is found to be controlled by administrators who are clearly those with power and influence.

Specifically, decision uncertainty, decision importance and group or subunit ability to influence are expected to be related to the degree of shared authority for the decision. The study sheds light on the contextual factors that serve as sources of influence to subunits and clarifies subunits' influence ability with respect to decision related factors (i.e., consensus, routineness, legal and formal support), organization related factors (i.e., centralization, leadership style), and environment related factors (economic and political).

In order to examine the model, the research design utilizes the decision as the unit of analysis in a cross sectional study which investigates decisionmaking behavior in school districts. Information relating to ten decisions in each of twelve districts provide 120 observations of decisions. Decisions were selected to vary on dimensions of importance and routineness. School districts were selected to insure variance of demographic and political characteristics.

Overall, the regression model which examines the relative and separate contributions of fifteen independent variables explains 57.1 percent of variance in the shared decision process measure.

Findings show that the degree to which decisionmaking is shared is primarily a function of the needs and choices of the administrator irrespective of the desires and power of those who are affected by the decision. Specifically, results show that decisions are made in a more autocratic process when the decision is uncertain and important to administrators. Decisions are made in a less autocratic and in a more shared process when the decision is important to certain subunits (community groups) when the decision is not routine and when there are distinct rules and regulations which mandate teacher involvement in a decision. Findings also show that administrators are not taking risks in decision situations, but that they are sharing decisions primarily when information, subunit wishes and possible outcomes are already known.

TOWARD A COMMUNICATION THEORY OF ORGANIZATION

Order No. 7917267

PACANOWSKY, Michael Eugene, Ph.D. Stanford University, 1979. 160pp.

Characteristic of current theories of organizational communication are three models: 1) the individual as a psychological or sociological "machine," 2) communication as a process of information transfer, and 3) the organization as a self-regulating entity. In the present dissertation, these models are critiqued and rejected, and an alternate theoretical perspective is proposed. This alternate perspective is based on models of 1) the individual as meaning-maker, 2) communication as a convergent process whereby meaning is co-constructed by communicators, and 3) the organization as nothing other than networks of coactors who, by communicating, attempt to construct common definitions of situations and act within the framework of the common meanings they have established.

These models present a coherent framework from which an understanding of organizational communication can be developed. Eight variables related to the processes of meaning management and organizational functioning are identified: time, task demands, problematicness, expectations, relevance, communication activity, communication effectiveness, and task performance. These are related in six hypotheses that serve as the basis for a test of the adequacy of the alternate theoretical perspective.

1. Problematicness is a function of previous levels of problematicness, expectations, relevance, communication effectiveness, task performance, and task demands.
2. Expectations are a function of previous levels of expectations, problematicness, task performance, communication effectiveness, and task demands.
3. Relevance is a function of previous levels of relevance, time, and task demands.
4. Communication activity is a function of previous levels of communication activity, problematicness, and relevance.
5. Communication effectiveness is a function of previous levels of communication effectiveness, problematicness, and communication activity.
6. Task performance is a function of previous levels of task performance, problematicness, communication effectiveness, and task demands.

A time-series experiment was designed to test these hypotheses. Data were gathered using three simulated organizations in which initial communication networks were fixed. Experimental treatments involving changes in task demands were administered to two of the three organizations. A questionnaire was administered to research participants every six minutes during a two-hour experimental session.

Graphs of each of the variables are presented as functions of time. These graphs visually demonstrate that the processes of organizational functioning are generally regular and time-dependent. Correlations among the variables are also presented. Sixteen of eighteen hypothesized bivariate relationships are statistically significantly different from zero, indicating a substantial degree of interrelatedness among the variables of interest. The six hypotheses are reformulated as regression equations with dummy variables controlling for experimental treatment and unique effects of experimental session on each organization. Data are pooled across the three organizations and analyzed using Nerlove's method of Generalized Least Squares. Multiple R^2s range from .31 for the equation predicting task performance to .75 for the equation predicting relevance. In all equations, the multiple R^2s are significantly different from zero ($p \leq .005$).

These findings are interpreted as evidence for the potential usefulness of the perspective of organizational communication developed in this dissertation. Recommendations for future research and implications for organizational communication practitioners are included.

COMMUNICATION BEHAVIOR OF SUPERVISORS: PARTICIPATIVENESS, UNCERTAINTY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLEXITY

Order No. 7926433

SORENSON, Ritchie Lee, Ph.D. Purdue University, 1979. 202pp. Major Professor: W. Charles Redding

This investigation was an experiment examining the relationships among participative leadership, uncertainty, informational complexity, and communication. The purpose of the study was to obtain a better understanding of differences in the ways which managers interact with their environments. A basic premise of the study was that the organizational environment may be described in terms of information and interaction with the environment in terms of uncertainty.

Based upon a literature review, it appeared that a correlation might exist between participative leadership and managerial uncertainty. Two alternative explanations were hypothesized to account for differences in the communication behavior of participative and nonparticipative leaders. The first explanation asserted that managers differ in their perceptions of the environment. The second explanation claimed that managers do not differ perceptually, but do differ in their reactions to perceptions.

Students at a midwestern university were asked to participate in the study based upon their scores on a small group participative leadership measure. Students scoring either one standard deviation above or below the mean were asked to participate in the study and were assigned to either the high or low participative leadership condition. Subjects were asked to supervise a three member group (consisting entirely of confederates) in solving the stimulus problem. The stimulus task was designed to vary informational complexity by combining either ambiguous or nonambiguous information with few or many informational components resulting in four conditions varying from low to high complexity. Subjects supervised problem-solving for ten minutes. Afterwards, a questionnaire was administered to subjects. Videotaped communication behavior was coded and rated by judges following the experimental manipulation.

Tests of hypotheses did not support the "perception" explanation of participative behavior. Partial support was suggested, however, for the notion that nonparticipative leaders respond differently to informational environments compared to participative leaders. Specifically, nonparticipative leaders demonstrated more anxiety and asked for more suggestions than participative leaders in many-component informational conditions. Participative leaders asked for more information than nonparticipative leaders in few-component conditions. Both types of leaders asked more total questions in ambiguous than in nonambiguous conditions.

Additional significant results were obtained which were not hypothesized. Both participative and nonparticipative supervisors: desired more information in many than in few-component informational conditions; were less certain about how democratic they should have been in ambiguous as compared with nonambiguous environments; asked for opinions more in few than in many-component conditions; and demonstrated a more intense communicator style in ambiguous than nonambiguous conditions.

In addition, nonparticipative leaders asked for information in all conditions more often than did participative leaders. Participative leaders were more uncertain about how democratic they should have been than nonparticipative leaders. Participative leaders generated more subjective response uncertainty than nonparticipative leaders in one of the moderately complex conditions, while nonparticipative leaders generated more subjective response uncertainty than participative leaders in high and low complexity conditions.

Overall, results of the study indicated there were some differences in the way that participative and nonparticipative leaders interacted with their environments. The final portion of the dissertation was devoted to a discussion of significant results from an information-processing perspective. A conceptual model was proposed which suggests that participative (nonanxious) leaders are highly adaptive to their environments during information processing, while nonparticipative (anxious) leaders are more dependent upon prior conceptualizations during information processing. The implications of the two proposed styles of information processing are discussed as they relate to various levels of environmental complexity.

A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS BETWEEN USER-MANAGERS AND INFORMATION SERVICE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL

Order No. 7917324

SPENCE, Jimmy Wayne, D.B.A. Texas Tech University, 1978. 220pp. Chairman: Dr. Norman Lyons

PURPOSE: This study investigated a substitute measurement for management involvement both before and after a management information system was implemented and its relationship to management satisfaction. In addition, the possibility of utilizing perceived communication success as a surrogate for management satisfaction was investigated. Finally, the feasibility of creating a model of perceived communication success of the interaction between managers and Information Services Department personnel was examined.

PROCEDURE: This investigation was segmented into two phases--a pilot study and a post study. In the pilot study, data were collected from 51 respondents representing management and Information Services Department personnel of five companies. The data were utilized for the refinement of questionnaires and for the creation and tuning of the models of perceived communication success. (The data indicated a management model and a separate, but similar, model for Information Services Department personnel.)

The post study employed the case methodology. Data were collected from both management and Information Services Department personnel of three companies (cases). The post study analysis was based on 128 questionnaires. (The management group of one company was eliminated because of a low return rate.) The response rate was 61.8 percent for managers and 68 percent for Information Services Department personnel.

FINDINGS: Three null hypotheses and one proposition were evaluated in the investigation, with a .05 level of significance needed for rejection. Each hypothesis was subjected to chi square analysis, and the proposition was examined using the Mann-Whitney "U" test. Hypothesis I: There is no relationship between the manager's level of satisfaction with a management information system and the manager's level of pre-implementation involvement in the development of the system. It was accepted.

Hypothesis II: There is no relationship between the manager's level of satisfaction with a management information system and the manager's level of post-implementation involvement with an existing system. It was accepted.

Hypothesis III: There is no relationship between the manager's level of satisfaction with a management information system and the perceived effectiveness of his communication with Information Services Department personnel. It was accepted.

Proposition I: There is no model of perceived communication success representing the interaction between managers and Information Services Department personnel. It was accepted.

CONCLUSIONS: The research established that management satisfaction with a management information system is not related to their level of involvement with the system when measured on an activity dimension. Previous research has established a relationship between these two variables when involvement was measured on the basis of numbers of contacts between managers and Information Services Department personnel. In addition, while prior research has established that effective communication is related to improved job performance, the respondents' perception of communication success was not related to improved performance as measured by satisfaction.

The research further determined that due to situational factors, there exists no single model of perceived communication effectiveness. Such models, if they exist, must be developed on a case-by-case basis.

ORGANIZATIONAL STORIES AS AN EXPRESSION OF MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY: IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL CONTROL IN ORGANIZATIONS

Order No. 7917290

WILKINS, Alan Lee, Ph.D. Stanford University, 1979. 211pp.

This study focuses on stories told by participants in organizations which are about the company and its representatives. As an extension of the work of Clark (1970), it is hypothesized that in specified kinds of organizations, the historical development of the organization may be seen as a fulfillment of the strong purpose of a top manager or of a management group. The "saga", or story of unique accomplishment, of the company may be the means of passing on the values (the construction of reality) of management to participants in the organization.

The form of social control which results when participants share an interpretation of organizational history is contrasted with a more bureaucratic form of control. The latter, more explicit, form of control, is obtained by making rules and supervising to insure conformity. A more implicit form of control results when people become committed to shared values and practices. Stories about the organization which are interpreted in terms of the management philosophy and which are the basis for a claim of organizational uniqueness were predicted to be positively associated with commitment to the organization of those who tell and believe them. Further, when participants tell the same stories to illustrate management philosophy, they are more likely to take the same meaning from the philosophy and to apply it in the same way.

Two organizations were selected from the 22 1975 Fortune 1000 electronics and components companies such that company A represents a bureaucratic form of control and company Z represents a more implicit form of control characteristic of clans (Ouchi and Johnson, 1978). At company Z, there is a greater emphasis on the management philosophy and there are more common socializing experiences. Company Z participants were thus expected to tell more stories about the history of the company, to interpret proportionately more of their stories by referring to the management philosophy, and to use stories to legitimate a claim of company uniqueness. They were further expected to tell more stories told by others. It was predicted that in both organizations, commitment to the company would be positively associated with the number of favorable stories, and with the number of stories associated with management philosophy, and with the number of stories claiming company uniqueness.

Data were collected through tape-recorded interviews and by means of a survey administered to each participant. Stories were bracketed and coded for content. The mean inter-coder reliability for the bracketing of stories and content categories was .82.

In each company, a stratified random sample was employed to select 20 participants from a staff division and 20 from an operating division such that rank (two levels--high and low) would be crossed with tenure (two levels--long and short).

The hypotheses were largely confirmed. Story telling situations were also very different between the two companies. Company Z participants more often learned stories from others in the company while company A participants told stories about their own experience. Company Z participants told a significantly greater proportion of their stories to outsiders and a much greater proportion of these "outsider" stories were favorable and associated with the management philosophy.

This study suggests that stories not only symbolize the values of story tellers but they are also frequently used to teach these values to others. The study represents an advance in the understanding of implicit control mechanisms in organizations and a contrast with the more rational/structural focus of much organizational research in the past 15 to 20 years.

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